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MHMR to Receive National Award

By Emily Moses Mandell

The Cabinet for Health and Family Services Department of Mental Health and Mental Retardation has received a prestigious, national award from the Council of State Governments. The award is one of eight given to innovative state programs throughout the nation.

The CSG Innovations Award will be presented to MHMR for developing and implementing the Kentucky Jail Mental Health Crisis Network. Innovations Awards recognize exemplary state programs and practices with the goal of transferring those successful programs to other states.

The program has been in full operation in 80 percent of Kentucky jails for the past year. During that time, suicides in Kentucky jails have decreased by 80 percent.

Rita Ruggles, mental health program administrator in MHMR, has seen the project through from start to finish and offered insight into the need for such as program.

“The program was created as a result of an investigative report by the Louisville Courier-Journal in 2002 that highlighted the problem of suicide in local jails,” said Ruggles. “This report definitely got the attention of several key legislators. Seventeen suicides and two deaths in restraints were identified in the report.”

A pilot program was developed and implemented in 2003 and legislative support was sought in 2004. House Bill 67, sponsored by Sen. Dan Kelly, R-Springfield, successfully gained bipartisan support and was passed to fund the program in 2004.

“Adequate mental health care in Kentucky jails was basically nonexistent before the passage of

this legislation and the subsequent appropriation,” said Ruggles. “Jails and prisons have become the ‘de facto’ mental institutions across the nation with the downsizing of hospitals and cuts in funding for services.”

Ruggles said the benefits of the program for the state – and those it serves – are numerous, including:

- Strengthening the relationship between jails and mental health providers
- Providing a targeted funding stream for jail-based mental health care
- Coordinating mental health care statewide
- Reducing suicides
- Improving the probability for inmates seeking treatment when released

The program also established the first statewide database for people with disabilities booked into jails.

Local jailers, local governments, state hospitals, community mental health centers, Kentucky Department for Mental Health and Mental Retardation Services, Kentucky Department of Corrections, the Kentucky Association of Counties and both the Justice and Health and Family Services Cabinets, as well as the inmates and their families, have benefited from the establishment of this service statewide.

“The program enhances community safety by assuring linkages to community mental health providers which, in turn, reduces the likelihood of re-offending,” said Ruggles. “It is the epitome of what a few committed folks can accomplish when they are dedicated and strategic with their efforts.”

About the Program

The Kentucky Jail Mental Health Crisis Network has four major components from the time

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someone is taken to jail until the decision on how to house and classify the person is made.

Standardized Screening Tools - Developed and implemented in each jail.

Risk Assessment Tool - A toll-free telephone triage line staffed by a licensed mental health professional 24 hours a day, seven days a week, was established and a validated risk assessment tool was created. The risk assessment tool guides a telephone interview among the jail staff, the qualified mental health professional and the inmate.

Jail Management Protocols – Developed based on the level of risk identified during the telephone interview. These protocols represent the best practice standards in the industry and integrate the jail standards for housing and classification of inmates.

Follow-up Mental Health Care – The creation of this program also allowed for the first dedicated funding stream to cover the costs associated with jail-based behavioral health care. Depending on the risk level identified, the local mental health provider is contacted by the triage line staff to go to the jail and complete a face-to-face evaluation and make recommendations to the jail regarding the mental health care for the inmate.

Kentucky Observes World Breastfeeding Month

By Anya Armes Weber

Breast milk is the perfect food for babies, research shows, and a new state law may help mothers be less reluctant to nurse in public to meet their children's needs.

Kentucky is one of several states observing August as World Breastfeeding Month, and this year's theme is "Code Watch: 25 Years of

Protecting Breastfeeding," which highlights the importance of protecting breastfeeding in our communities.

Becky Derifield, breastfeeding promotion coordinator for the Kentucky Cabinet for Health and Family Services' Department for Public Health, said this is an exciting time for Kentucky families since the law took effect last month.

"The new breastfeeding law offers support to Kentucky families and protects future generations of mothers and children," she said.

Sponsored by Sen. Tom Buford, R-Nicholasville, SB 106 affirms a mother's right to breastfeed or express breast milk in public. The law says breastfeeding or expressing milk for a child "shall not be considered an act of public indecency and shall not be considered indecent exposure, sexual conduct, lewd touching or obscenity."

Breastfeeding provides nutritional and health advantages that last far beyond infancy, Derifield said, such as reduction in ear infections, allergies, hospitalization and childhood obesity.

"Babies who are breastfed are less likely to grow up overweight and unhealthy," Derifield said. "It's giving children the best start in life."

Breastfeeding also offers health benefits to mothers by helping them lose pregnancy weight faster, reducing the risk of breast and ovarian cancer and reducing the risk of osteoporosis later in life.

The American Academy of Pediatrics suggests exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months and breastfeeding with complementary foods for at least the first year.

The number of Kentucky mothers who breastfeed at birth has increased by 4 percent to 54 percent in the past two years. Derifield said the Cabinet is encouraging more resources to

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move that number closer to the national rate of 75 percent.

“Every child has the right to the highest attainable standard of health,” she said. “Breastfeeding moms need support from their health care provider, family and friends to successfully breastfeed their infants.”

Despite the compelling evidence to support breastfeeding, new mothers can face barriers that make it difficult to initiate or prolong breastfeeding. These can include hospital policies that do not support breastfeeding, health care providers who are uncomfortable with breastfeeding, perceptions that breastfeeding mothers may not be able to produce enough milk to feed their baby and lack of support from family, friends and coworkers.

“Research shows that new moms are extremely vulnerable to the messages they receive from their health care providers regarding infant feeding practices,” Derifield said. Medical professionals can make a difference by offering families appropriate breastfeeding educational messages and positive support.

The Cabinet is also encouraging breastfeeding at work.

“Breastfeeding saves money for families and employers,” Derifield said. “It lowers work absenteeism and lowers insurance costs.”

The Cabinet encourages worksites to adopt policies and practices that recognize breastfeeding as the norm. Breastfeeding rooms are appearing in public buildings as well as in large and small businesses across Kentucky.

In 2005, the Cabinet established a breastfeeding room for its central office in Frankfort. Working mothers can use their break time to express, and visiting moms are offered a quiet place to stop with their babies.

“We hope the Cabinet can serve as a model to other state businesses in assuring today’s moms that working and breastfeeding are not exclusive,” Derifield said.

Also this month, the Cabinet and Louisville Metro Department of Public Health are sponsoring the Rock and Relax room at the Kentucky State Fair in Louisville. The room provides mothers visiting the fair with a clean, private place to change and breastfeed their babies or express milk. The fair runs Aug. 17-27.

Breastfeeding Room Available in DPH

As August is World Breastfeeding Month, you are invited to stop by and see the Breastfeeding Room that is available for nursing mothers at the Cabinet for Health and Family Services (CHFS). The room was developed with funds from the state Women, Infant and Children (WIC) Program to support working moms within the Cabinet and those who visit the facility. The room is sponsored by the Nutrition Services Branch in the Division of Adult and Child Health Improvement.

The room is located on the second floor of the Health Services Building in the center wing. The Breastfeeding Room is open and available to any breastfeeding mom who works in or is visiting the complex. The room is furnished with two glider rockers, nursing stools, a sink for cleaning breast pump equipment and washing hands.

The Breastfeeding Room opened officially in October 2005 and has been in continuous use since the opening. Working mothers in the CHFS complex have been able to plan breaks to utilize the room. The room is able to comfortably accommodate two mothers at a time. We currently have seven mothers using the room and have several mothers-to-be planning to use the room in the near future.

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For more information about the Breastfeeding Room, Breastfeeding Month or the new legislation, please contact Becky Derifield at 502-564-3827, ext. 3815 or Becky.Derifield@ky.gov.

Governor Authorizes Tamiflu Stockpile to Protect Kentuckians

Governor Ernie Fletcher last week authorized the Department for Public Health (DPH) to order a stockpile of antiviral drugs to help protect Kentuckians in the event of an influenza pandemic.

"It is vital that we prepare now to protect Kentuckians in the event of an influenza pandemic," said Cabinet for Health and Family Services Secretary Mark D. Birdwhistell. "History demonstrates the devastating toll that such pandemics can have. Because these antiviral drugs can help us prevent or lessen the severe illness associated with pandemics, we must take the federal government's recommendation to build this stockpile."

Kentucky has asked the federal government to reserve the full 432,381 courses of antivirals recommended to the state by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). In addition, the CDC has committed to having 613,703 courses of antivirals earmarked for Kentucky in the federal stockpile by the end of 2007. The total of 1,046,084 courses will be enough to cover 25 percent of the state's population.

"We are proceeding with the diligence Kentuckians deserve in our preparations for a possible influenza pandemic," said William D. Hacker, M.D., DPH commissioner and acting undersecretary for health. "This stockpile will be a key asset to our response in the event of a pandemic."

The state will work with the federal government during the next six months to develop a purchase plan for the drugs Tamiflu and Relenza, available to states at a 25 percent discount. The estimated cost to the state will be \$6 million. The recommendation to cover 25 percent of the population comes from estimates of previous illness rates during pandemics.

More information on pandemic flu readiness is available at <http://www.chfs.ky.gov/dph/epi/preparedness/pandemicinfluenza.htm> and www.pandemicflu.gov.

Fair Volunteers Meetings Set

Volunteers for CHFS booths at the Kentucky State Fair should make plans to attend one of two informational sessions this week.

Meetings for volunteers will be:

- 1 p.m. Wednesday, Aug. 9, first floor Auditorium, L and N Building, 908 W. Broadway, Louisville
- 2 p.m. Thursday, Aug. 10, Bluegrass (Undersecretaries) Conference Room, fourth Floor, CHR Building, Frankfort

You'll get general information about the fair and the areas you'll be staffing and have the chance to ask questions. You also will receive your staff T-shirts and tickets/parking passes.

Please [RSVP](#) for the meeting you will attend so your shirt will be available. If you can't make either session, please ask someone to pick up your items.

Deadline Extended for the Certified Public Manager (CPM) Program

The Office of Employee and Organizational Development (OEOD) has extended the deadline for submission of Certified Public Manager

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nomination forms. Although OEOD has received enough nominations for the fall, availability remains for both the spring and summer classes.

Please forward nominations by Sept. 1 to the Office of Human Resource Management, Attn: Maranda Cummins.

For more information, please refer to the article [Changes to the Certified Public Manager \(CPM\) Program Announced](#) on Page 4 of the July 24 Focus.

Volunteer Vibes: New School Year Offers Volunteer Opportunities

By Eileen Cackowski, KCCVS

As school begins again, students and adults may consider ways they can help meet community needs as volunteers. With service opportunities offered by local agencies, community and civic groups, and the faith-based community, the beginning of a new school year is a good time to assess your “giving” balance.

Many schools in Kentucky offer service learning as part of their curricula. Service learning helps students prepare for life outside the classroom through structured exposure to community problems and needs. Students work together and with community leaders to determine how best to address needs and problems, work to resolve issues and, finally, evaluate their methods, progress, approach and success.

The service learning model is often an effective approach to volunteering for adults, too. By providing opportunities to investigate and analyze community needs up close and personal, and to strategize on how to tackle local problems, adult volunteers often feel more connected to their service and claim ownership in the success of efforts to resolve local problems.

Many nonprofit organizations plan annual special celebrations to recognize and recruit volunteers. Volunteer service is good cause to inspire personal celebrations in our hearts. It feels good to make a positive difference in someone’s life.

For volunteer opportunities give us a call and we will try to point you in the right direction. (502) 564-7420.

Focus Health Tip of the Week

August is Children's Eye Health and Safety Month

Because many vision problems begin in childhood, it’s important for children to receive proper eye care from the time they are infants. Early detection and treatment are essential to preventing conditions that could potentially cause problems or vision loss.

Vision problems affect one in 20 preschoolers and one in four school-aged children. Over 12 million children suffer from vision impairment.

Protect your child’s eyes from the danger of eye injuries. Be sure the toys your child plays with are appropriate for his or her age and maturity level. Avoid toys with sharp, protruding or projectile parts. Sports accidents could also affect your child’s eyes, so make sure he or she wears appropriate protective eyewear.

Employee Enrichment

By Anya Armes Weber

Employee Enrichment is a weekly feature for CHFS staff. These tips for making work better focus on team building, customer service and personal development.

Listening is an essential skill for staff wanting to be part of healthy workplace relationships and

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strong teams. The person speaking to you wants to believe he/she has your full attention and consideration. And you want to have a true understanding of the person so you can improve your communication.

Steven Covey, author of “The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People,” writes that there are four stages to “empathetic listening,” or listening with the intent to understand.

1. Mimic content. You are forced to pay attention to exactly what the speaker is saying if you have to repeat it word for word.
2. Rephrase the content. Take what the speaker has said and put it into your own words.
3. Make a non-critical statement about the speaker’s feelings. You can show that you are also taking note of the speaker’s emotional point of view.
4. Combine the second and third steps. Rephrase content and make a nonjudgmental statement.

When you listen empathetically, you can better interpret your coworkers and what’s important to them. This can save valuable work time that is better used helping customers.